

CITATION: ABDUL SAMAD MINTY

Abdul Minty was born in Hartebeesfontein on the 31st of October 1933 in what is now called the Limpopo Province. He grew up in Johannesburg and left South Africa in 1958 for Britain to join the anti-apartheid movement to pursue his studies in Britain. He holds a BSc (Econ) degree in International Relations (University College, London) and a MSc (Econ) in International Relations from the same institution.

Minty, was a stalwart of the anti-apartheid struggle, and he played an instrumental role in exposing the apartheid government's nuclear armaments programme. He was a leading figure in South Africa's unique role internationally as an exemplar of voluntarily dismantling its nuclear armaments in the interests of world peace and the use of science for human development, rather than destruction. The first country in the world to have done so.

He played a pioneering role in the development of South Africa's principled position on advancing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and on the need for nuclear weapon states to disarm in a transparent and verifiable manner. Between 1962 and 1991, Minty was the Honorary Secretary of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, and he played a central role in exposing and isolating the apartheid state and supporting the struggle against apartheid. Among others, he worked for the International Development and Aid Fund, which provided legal and humanitarian support for those fighting against the apartheid state. Minty also led the lobbying of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which was instrumental in securing South Africa's suspension from the Olympic movement, and the wider sports boycott against the apartheid state.

As apartheid South Africa rapidly built up its military strength, he undertook research on its defence establishment and the support it received from external sources. His study of South Africa's Defence Strategy, published in 1969, attracted wide attention and helped develop the campaign by the Anti-Apartheid Movement for the abrogation of the Simonstown Agreement between Britain and South Africa and the ending of all military links with South Africa.

Minty was called to give evidence as an individual expert on four occasions to the United Nations (UN) Security Council Arms Embargo Committee between 1977 and 1994. From 1979 to 1994 he was the Director of the World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa. During this period, he worked closely with the African Group, the Non-Aligned Movement, and other members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) over South Africa's nuclear programme and lobbied for sanctions against the regime. He was instrumental in the removal of South Africa from the designated seat for Africa on the IAEA Board of Governors.

In the post-apartheid period, Minty was a key advisor to South Africa's delegation at the 1995 Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and then led South Africa's delegation at the subsequent Review Conferences in 2000 and 2005. He played a pioneering role in the development of South Africa's principled position on advancing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and on the need for nuclear weapon states to immediately disarm in a transparent and verifiable manner.

In 2006, Minty was elected president of the IAEA's General Conference, which marked the beginning of activities commemorating the IAEA's 50th anniversary. One of Minty's keen interests at the IAEA was nuclear safeguards, and he was drawn into re-establishing trust between the Agency, some of its key members and the Republic of Iran. At one point he was the only board member who could talk to both sides in this stand-off.

In the post-apartheid period, Minty had a distinguished career in the public service in South Africa. He was the Deputy Director-General: Ambassador and Special Representative: Disarmament in South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Minty chaired the South African Council for the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, he was a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors as well as a member of the Board of the South African Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa (NECSA). He took a special interest in promoting programmes applying nuclear technology in development, for example in agriculture, public health, and hydrology. Minty further chaired the Space Council and the Non-Proliferation Council for several years, holding these positions because of his deep understanding of multilateralism and his thorough knowledge of global security and its connections with trade.

Minty was also the South Africa's Ambassador and Head of the South African mission to the United Nations in Geneva and the Personal Representative of the President to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Steering Committee and the representative of the Department of Foreign Affairs on the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC).

In recognition of his long-standing contributions to the struggle against apartheid, it is therefore befitting that the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, bestows an Honorary Doctorate Degree on Mr Abdul Minty.